

MAKE IT REMOTE: *A Survival Guide For The Future Of Work.*



Version 1.5
Matthew Manos

MAKE IT REMOTE: *A Survival Guide For The Future Of Work.*

In 2020, people around the world went into lock-down due to the sudden spread of COVID-19.

In-person classes were forced to quickly convert into Online learning experiences. Businesses scrambled to develop work-from-home policies.

While the adjustments made for COVID-19 may seem to be short-term and proactive measures, a cultural shift that could spark an entirely new and inclusive way of thinking about work is coming. The fact is, remote is NOT impossible! Will we you be ready for it? This is your survival guide for the future of work.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOLKIT

This toolkit is designed to be used by leaders and team members. The toolkit begins on **page 03** with “The Remote Journey”. This is a high-level road map that outlines the key stages to work toward in order to go remote. The road map also serves as a table of contents for this toolkit. No matter what stage of the journey you may already be on, there is something to help you work smarter.

In addition, we have some tips and tricks around running remote workshops, writing effective emails, and time management in the bonus material section. That starts on **page 18**.

If you have any additional tips or tricks that you'd like to see featured in an eventual Version 2.0, please feel free to send us an email by writing to info@verynice.co. Include “Make it Remote” in your subject line. Thanks for reading, and good luck with your remote journey!



THE REMOTE JOURNEY: *What does it take to go remote?*

The remote journey looks slightly different for leaders than it does for team members. The path below is a sample road map for going remote.

THE REMOTE JOURNEY: LEADERS

Assess the risks and rewards

Before diving in to going fully remote, take the time to assess whether or not going remote is the right fit for you. **See p. 05.**

Prepare for a trial period

Get your systems in place for a one to five day trial period, and make sure your team has what they need. **See p. 06.**

Conduct a trial period

A trial period is a great way to understand the systems you'll need to put in place to operate. Monitor as you go to see what kinks need to get worked out. **See p. 07.**

Re-assess the risks and rewards

Reflect on the trial period and determine if remote work is right for you. Also, listen to your team. How did it go from their perspective? **See p. 08.**

Create a work-from-home policy

Get everyone on the same page about the dos and don'ts of working from home at your company. **See p. 09.**

Managing remote

Managing a remote team is not the same thing as managing a local team that's sitting down the hall from you. Check out these tips and tools to up your management game. **See p. 11.**

THE REMOTE JOURNEY: TEAM MEMBERS

Prepare for a trial period

Make sure you have everything you need to be able to work from home. **See p. 14.**

Conduct a trial period

Your company might conduct a trial period before fully committing to a remote approach. It won't be perfect, but be prepared to reflect on how it went and report back. **See p. 15.**

Report back on how it went

Throughout the trial period, take notes about what you liked about working remote, and what could be improved.

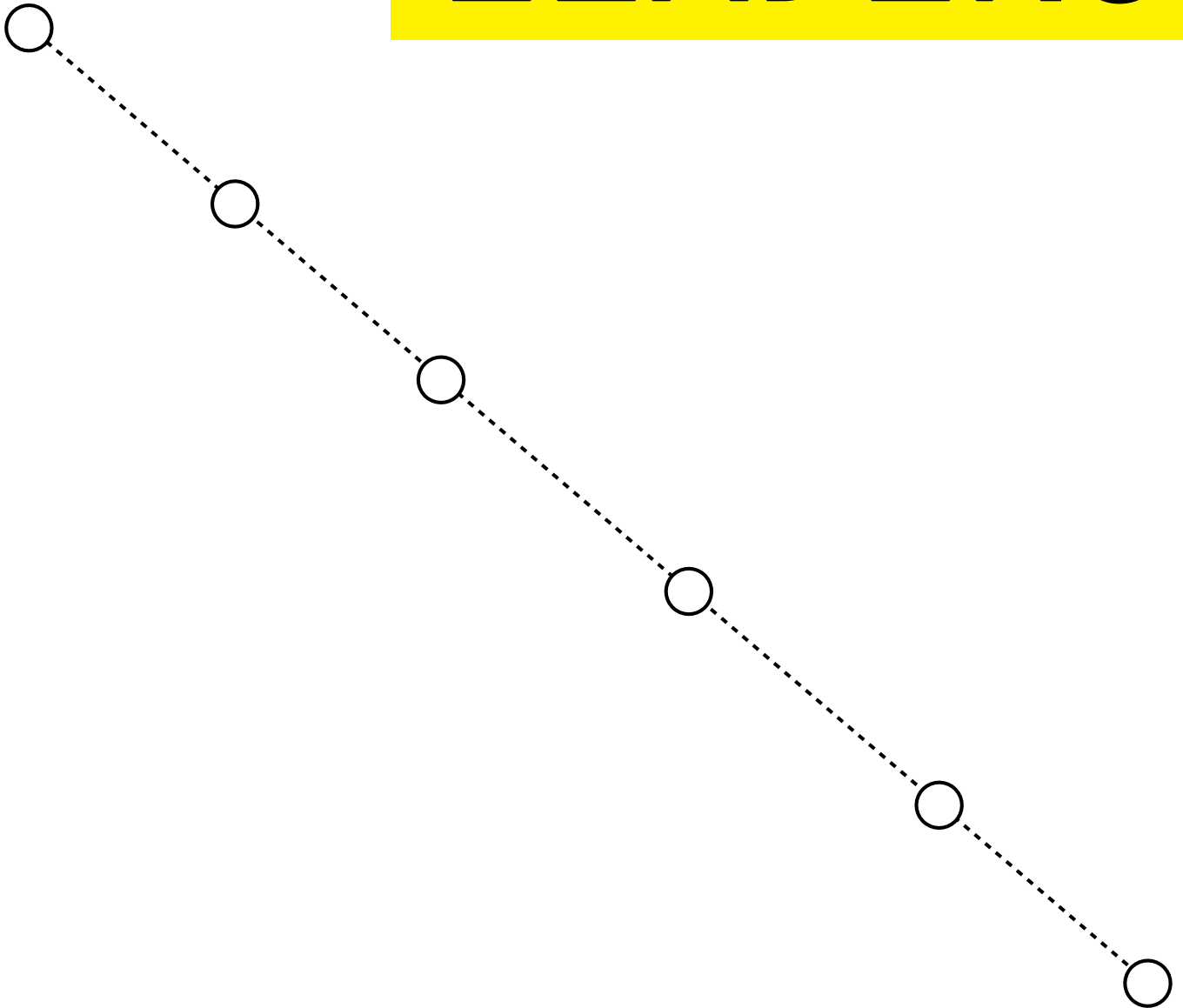
Understand your company's policy

If your company does go remote, they'll provide a policy. Take the time to read it and understand it. **See p. 16.**

Work remote without going nuts

Working from home isn't as easy as it sounds. Check out these tips to stay happy, accountable, and connected. **See p. 17.**

THE REMOTE JOURNEY FOR LEADERS



ASSESS THE RISKS AND REWARDS

As with anything new, there are plenty of risk and rewards associated with making the move toward a fully or partially remote working environment. These risks and rewards vary greatly by industry and position, so it's important that you weigh them for yourself to see if this is something you're even willing to consider.

Make a list of six pros of remote for your business.

1

2

3

4

5

6

Re-order from most (1) to least (6) important.

1

2

3

4

5

6

Indicate probability on a scale of 1-10. 1 is least probable.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Make a list of six cons of remote for your business.

1

2

3

4

5

6

What is a potential compromise (if any) you could make to make it less of a con?

1

2

3

4

5

6

Further reading on the risks and rewards of remote work:

"How Remote Work Is Quietly Remaking Our Lives", Rani Molla. Vox.

<https://bit.ly/39OguUF>

■ The Remote Journey: Leaders

PREPARE FOR A TRIAL PERIOD

If, after assessing the initial risks and rewards, you determine that a fully or partially remote work environment could be a good fit for your business, you'll want to begin preparing for a trial period. Trial periods are typically one to five days long. The following breaks down what is possible to test, on what timespan.

Days:	One	Two	Three	Four	Five
Testing:	<i>General</i>	<i>Systems</i>	<i>Communication</i>	<i>Culture</i>	<i>Reliability</i>

TRIAL PERIOD PREPARATION CHECKLIST

To help you finalize your preparation for the remote work trial period, we have developed the following checklist. Please note that each business has different needs, so this checklist may not be exhaustive. This checklist is meant to be done for each role on your team.

Role: # people in this role: Good Internet?: **YES / NO**

Make a list of the software & equipment this role requires.

1

Does/do the person/people in this role have access to these at home? (circle one)

YES / NO

2

YES / NO

3

YES / NO

4

YES / NO

5

YES / NO

6

YES / NO

If you circled "no" on any of these, indicate your plan to acquire the resources below:

How will you share materials and information with members of this role?

How often will you keep in touch or check-in with members of this role?

■ *The Remote Journey: Leaders*

CONDUCT A TRIAL PERIOD

Throughout the trial period, keep track of the various benefits and challenges that stand out in the space provided below. Be sure to ask your team members to do the same thing!

BENEFITS

CHALLENGES

--	--

Further reading on how to get the most out of your Internet:

“10 Ways To Boost Your Wifi Signal”, Whitson Gordon. PC Mag.

<https://bit.ly/2U1R0wc>

RE-ASSESS THE RISKS AND REWARDS

Congratulations! You've finished your trial period. Now that is out of the way, and without referencing the pro-con list you created earlier, fill out the following worksheet.

Make a list of six pros of remote for your business.

1

2

3

4

5

6

Re-order from most (1) to least (6) important.

1

2

3

4

5

6

Indicate replicability on a scale of 1-10. 1 is least replicable.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Make a list of six cons of remote for your business.

1

2

3

4

5

6

How much will this negatively impact the business?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

How possible is it to correct these issues?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

BASED ON THE ABOVE, MARK ONE:

☐ *I am willing to commit to a remote policy. Continue to page 08!*

☐ *I am not willing to commit to a remote policy.*

YOUR REMOTE POLICY

Before you officially announce that working from home is allowed, you're going to want some very clear parameters that help everyone understand how this will work. Build your own remote policy using the worksheet below! *Check out the next page for examples if you need inspiration.*

Who gets the work-from-home perk?

How often do you allow the work-from-home perk?

When does the work-from-home perk happen, and who approves it?

What is the etiquette?

Under what circumstances can the work-from-home perk be revoked?

SAMPLE WORK-FROM-HOME POLICIES

The following are some sample work-from-home policies to consider adding to your employee handbook. This is not legal advice. Always consult a lawyer. When crafting your work-from-home policy, consider the following.

Who gets the work-from-home perk?

For example:

- All employees are entitled to participate in the work-from-home policy benefits.
- Employees who live outside of a 30-mile radius to the office are entitled to participate in the work-from-home policy benefits.
- Employees are evaluated for eligibility to participate in the work-from-home benefit, and are determined on a case-by-case basis.

How often do you allow the work-from-home perk?

For example:

- Employees who qualify for the work-from-home benefit are entitled to 1 work-from-home day each week. The specific day is flexible, and is up to the employee to decide based on workload and in-person meetings.
- Employees who qualify for the work-from-home benefit are entitled to 4 work-from-home days each month. Work-from-home days take place company wide on Wednesdays.
- Employees who qualify for the work-from-home benefit are entitled to unlimited work-from-home days.

When does the work-from-home perk happen, and who approves it?

For example:

- Employees must check-in with their manager prior to taking their work-from-home day.
- Employees may take their work-from-home day at anytime, given there is no meeting that requires in-person attendance, or a special company event.

What is the etiquette?

For example:

- Employees must be accessible during the set company office hours.
- Employees must check-in with their managers at the beginning and end of each work-from-home day.
- Employees are expected to complete all projects by the deadline specified by the manager.
- Employees are expected to have their camera on during virtual team meetings.
- Employees are expected to keep their cell phones close by in case their manager needs to get in touch with them about something that is urgent.

Under what circumstances can the work-from-home perk be revoked?

For example:

- Only in the case of global pandemic.
- Employees who fail to be accessible in the designated work hours will have their work-from-home privileges revoked.
- Employees who fail to complete their projects or deliverables in the designated time frame will have their work-from-home privileges revoked.

MANAGING REMOTE

When you have an office, you're able to quickly communicate with your staff by stopping by or organizing a conference call. Here are some must-have tools for making remote management easier:



For video calls, Zoom.



For staying in touch as a team, Slack.



For storing your files, Drive.



For group brainstorming, Mural.

In a remote working environment, it can be difficult to monitor hours correctly. Managers of remote teams may opt to evaluate the productivity of their individual team members by project deliverables instead of hours worked. *For example: Instead of "how many hours did you put in today?", "did you finish your deliverables for the day?"*

This simple shift in mindset is about empowering your team to work smarter, not harder. Remote teams typically enjoy a culture that is more flexible. For many employers, this can be challenging due to a lack of trust that everyone is spending their time appropriately. It can help to create a clear scope of work with each of your team members so that everyone knows what is expected of them. Use the following worksheet to develop a scope of work for an upcoming project. *Check out the next page for an example if you need inspiration.*

Task Name:

Parent Project Name:

Anticipated Effort:

Project Description and Desired Outcome

Resources Available

Due Date:

■ Resources for Leaders

SAMPLE SCOPE OF WORK

The following is a sample scope of work that might be sent to a remote employee. The scope of work would ideally be created in collaboration with the employee, especially to get everyone on the same page on the anticipated effort and desired outcome of the project. These are two types of information that often suffer from miscommunication or a lack of clarity and understanding.

Task Name: Code website home page

Parent Project Name: 2020 Website Overhaul

Anticipated Effort: 20 Hours (*determined by referencing historical pace on similar tasks*)

Project Description and Desired Outcome

Our goal is to build the code for the home page of our new website. We want the focus to be on the front-end development, and want it to be responsive across desktop, tablet, and mobile devices.

Resources Available

Jane is available to help troubleshoot some of the more complicated features of the home page. Bill has a tablet device that the code can be tested on as well.

Due Date: End of day Thursday so that we can review first thing Friday morning.

Further reading on how to manage a remote team:

"Top 15 Tips To Effectively Manage Remote Employees", Forbes Coaches Council. Forbes.

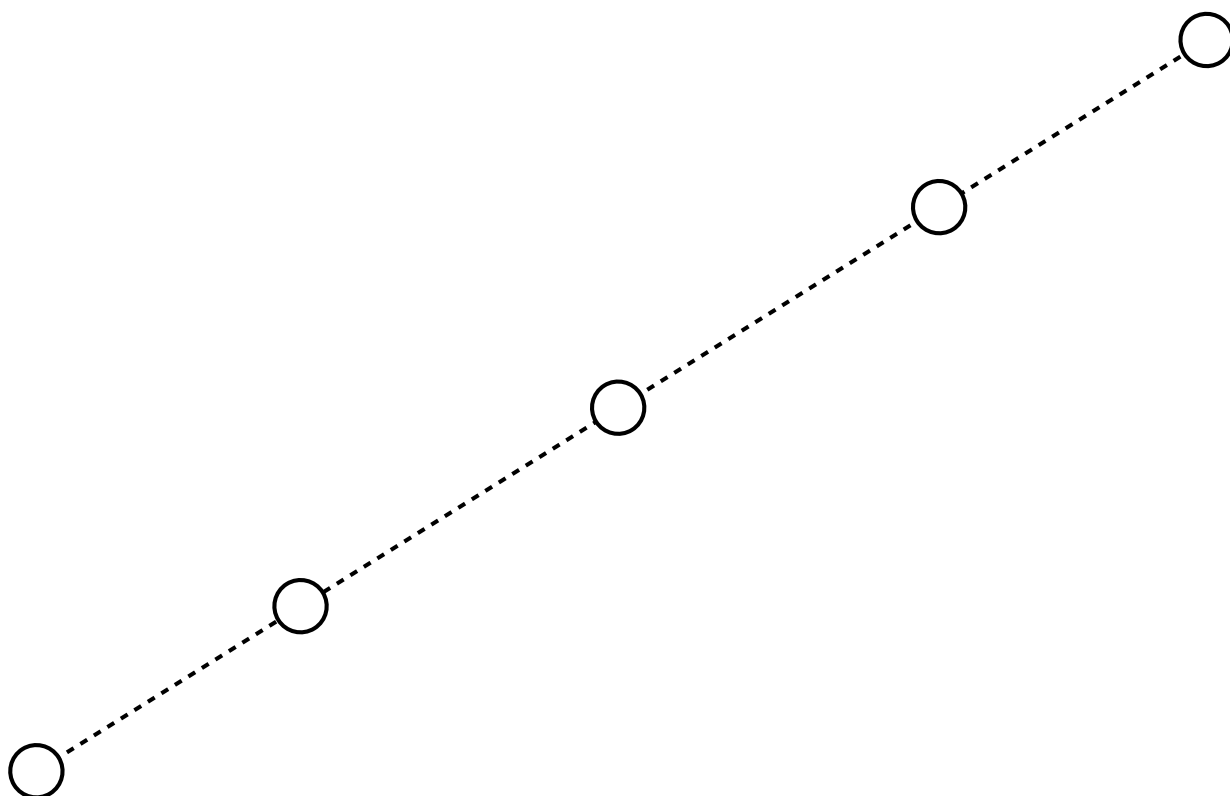
<https://bit.ly/2wVjO1l>

"12 Tips For Managing A Remote Team (And Loving It)", Heather McGough. Lean Startup Co.

<https://bit.ly/2WrfjXB>

"How To Manage Remote Direct Reports", Rebecca Knight. Harvard Business Review.

<https://bit.ly/2wUKi3w>



THE REMOTE JOURNEY FOR TEAM MEMBERS

■ *The Remote Journey: Team Members*

PREPARE FOR A TRIAL PERIOD

Your team lead should be working on determining the exact details of your trial period. The most important thing for you to be taking into consideration is the access (or lack of access) to critical resources you need to perform your job duties while working remotely.

TRIAL PERIOD PREPARATION CHECKLIST

To help you finalize your preparation for the remote work trial period, we have developed the following checklist. Please note that each role has different needs, so this checklist may not be exhaustive. This checklist is meant to be done for each role on your team.

Role: Manager: Good Internet?: **YES / NO**

Make a list of the software & equipment your role requires.

1

Do you have access to this software & equipment at home? (circle one)

YES / NO

2

YES / NO

3

YES / NO

4

YES / NO

5

YES / NO

6

YES / NO

If you circled “no” on any of these, indicate your plan to acquire the resources below:

If you have direct reports or frequent collaborators that you work with, list them below, and include their contact info.

■ The Remote Journey: Team Members

CONDUCT A TRIAL PERIOD

Throughout the trial period, keep track of the various benefits and challenges that stand out in the space provided below. It is important to be honest as your leader will be assessing whether or not it is possible to accommodate remote work. *Be sure to share this with your leader when the trial period is over.*

BENEFITS

CHALLENGES

--	--

Further reading on how to get the most out of your Internet:

"10 Ways To Boost Your Wifi Signal", Whitson Gordon. PC Mag.

<https://bit.ly/2U1R0wc>

■ *The Remote Journey: Team Members*

UNDERSTAND YOUR COMPANY'S POLICY

If your company ultimately decides to move forward with a policy around remote work, the leader should have considered the following questions. If you need any clarity on the policy, please be sure to check-in with your leader.

- 1. Who gets to work remote?**
- 2. How often does the company allow remote work?**
- 3. When does the remote work happen, and who approves it?**
- 4. What is the etiquette around remote work?**
- 5. Under what circumstances can the remote work privilege be revoked?**

YOUR ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS:

■ *The Remote Journey: Team Members*

WORK REMOTE WITHOUT GOING NUTS

So you're stuck at home, and are on the brink of losing it. Working from home is especially challenging when it comes to staying accountable, feeling connected to others, and managing your time. Here's a few best practices to keep in mind.

01: WEAR PANTS.

It's really tempting to see working from home as an opportunity to go days without changing out of your pajamas. Dress as you would at work. When you're done with your work, change. In doing so, you are allowing yourself to (even subconsciously) "enter" and "exit" work mode.

02: CARVE OUT A LITTLE SPACE.

Work somewhere other than your couch or bed. If possible, occupy a space in your home that is further away from where you like to relax or unwind. Creating boundaries in your physical space is crucial for being able to turn things off when your typical work hours are over.

03: KEEP TO YOUR TYPICAL HOURS.

With no boss looking over your shoulder or wandering through the halls, you might be able to get away with stretching things out. Avoid that! Stick to your typical hours so that you get the right amount of sleep and downtime.

04: MAINTAIN THOSE CO-WORKER FRIENDSHIPS.

Start a Slack channel with your team to stay in contact. Have check-ins with each other. Keep each other laughing. Even consider sharing lunch virtually over Zoom, FaceTime, or Google Hangouts!

05: REMEMBER TO GO OUTSIDE.

It's tempting to stay locked up in your house all day, but don't forget to go outside and smile at some clouds. Moving around is good for your body and soul. Take a walk on your breaks!

06: HAVE A RITUAL THAT HELPS YOU END YOUR WORK DAY.

At the end of your work day, play some music... go for a run... play some video games... have a beer! Do something that will help you celebrate being off work.

Do you have any ideas to add to this list? We'd love to hear them! Send an email to info@verynice.co with the subject line "Make it Remote".

By the way, here are some recommended tools to make your remote work life a bit more easy to manage:



For video calls, Zoom.



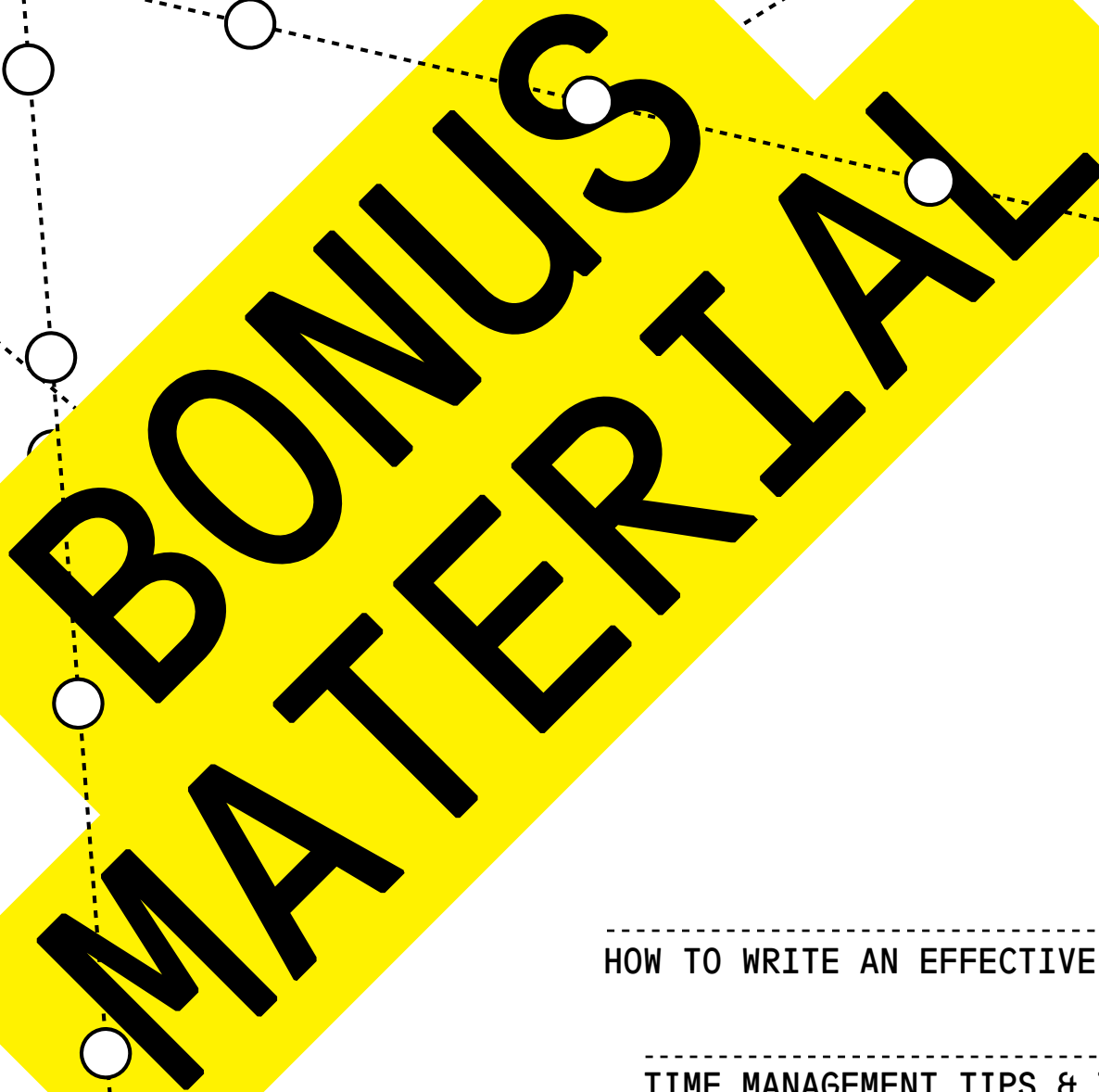
For staying in touch as a team, Slack.



For storing your files, Drive.



For group brainstorming, Mural.



BONUS MATERIAL

HOW TO WRITE AN EFFECTIVE EMAIL
Page 19

TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS & TRICKS
Page 20

BEST PRACTICES FOR VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS
Page 21

SAMPLE REMOTE WORK TECH STACK
Page 23

■ Bonus Material

HOW TO WRITE AN EFFECTIVE EMAIL: THINK, THEN WRITE, THEN SEND.

Do you ever sit down in front of your computer, get ready to write an email, but feel uncertain what to do? Well, there's a lot of ways to write a good email out there, but these are the tricks I use to get the right response, and make sure the reader on the other end gets it.

THE SUBJECT LINE

When writing a subject line, always ask yourself: what will they search to find this?". Emails rarely go unreceived, but often go marked as read without giving a reply. Busy people might check an email, and forget to reply. Make it easy for them to find it by including some context in the subject line.

THE BODY

Keep it short, or keep it long. Emails that are intended as quick report-outs on the progress of a project or task should be limited to a few sentences. On the other hand, emails that are intended to replace a meeting can be 3-5 paragraphs. Remember, many meetings can be replaced with a great, long, email. Plus, this gives you a paper trail and point of reference that everyone can look at.

THE TIMING

Think about how long it takes to read your email. Here's a common rule of thumb for emails that are looking for a quick response or green light: For every one minute it takes your recipient to read and absorb your message, it should only take them 10 seconds to reply. By including quick call-to-actions along the way, you can help

guide the recipient as they craft their response. You can also call out these action items by using **bold text** so that they are not missed.

THE ATTACHMENTS

When attaching files, use a PDF. It's the one file type that no one seems to ever have drama with. In addition, make sure that your file size is only a few megabytes. Finally, cross-reference your attachments in your email (just like a text book references "figures") so that the recipient knows what they are looking at, and why.

IN CONCLUSION

The better the email, the less likely you are to receive a phone call or get stuck in a rabbit hole of an email thread for clarity's sake. Take the time you need to craft something clear, concise, and action-oriented, and you'll start getting the results you want to see.

■ *Bonus Material*

TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS AND TRICKS

Since 2008, I've run a business that averages a dozen client engagements or projects at a time while simultaneously giving 30-50 talks and workshops across the globe each year, serving on board, and holding teaching positions at colleges and universities. In summary, I'm a busy dude, but at the same time, I almost never work on the weekend and am pretty much always home by 6:30pm. These are the seven tricks I use every day to manage my time:

GROW YOUR SELF-AWARENESS AS IT PERTAINS TO YOUR TIME

Whenever I take on a task that is unlike anything I've done before, I time myself. The next time I take on that same task, I time myself again. By the third time, I have the data I need to know how long certain tasks take me. I keep that log as a reference so that when I begin a task, I know how much time I will need to allocate toward it.

TIME BOX EVERYTHING

Once I know the task at hand, I check my log of comparable time estimates. I then find the corresponding amount of time on my calendar, and schedule it for myself. The key with time boxing is that you restrain from working on the task before or after. It's all about working within that scheduled moment.

LONG EMAILS > MEETINGS

Meetings are often referred to as one of the most significant time wasters. Especially meetings that are primarily being used to provide a simple update. Whenever you can replace a meeting with a very long and incredibly detailed email, you have an immediate paper trail and point of reference that everyone can look at.

ALSO, WRITE SHORT EMAILS

If someone writes you a long email, and at the end of the day it is clear that they are seeking a "yes" or a "no" answer, just type "yes" or "no". Everything else you'd write is just to be polite or make yourself sound smart by regurgitating what they just said. Not worth the time.

SURROUND YOURSELF WITH THE RIGHT COLLABORATORS

I've worked hard to find collaborators over the years, and I have full trust in them. This has allowed me to delegate many tasks I would have otherwise had to do myself. But the great thing? The people I've surrounded myself with are better than I at executing that task. Build your community of collaborators, and treat them like family!

SET BOUNDARIES

I don't reply to most calls or emails on the weekend or after 6:30pm. In the early days, there was absolutely no boundary between my work and my life. Now I always aim to conserve my energy for the next day. The goal is to design your work/life in a way that allows each day to require a similar amount of energy as the previous.

SLEEP EARLY. WAKE UP EARLY.

I've always been an early bird. It's allowed me to get the predictable things out of the way before the rest of the world wakes up, and brings the unpredictability. I tend to get to work 1-1.5 hours ahead of anyone else to do just this. While that results in me working more hours, the hours that are worked are significantly less stressful. Worth it!

■ Bonus Material

BEST PRACTICES FOR VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS

With clients across the globe, I often find myself in a workshop facilitator's worst nightmare... the virtual workshop. Luckily, it doesn't have to be bad at all! Here are some useful tools and best practices.

THINK ABOUT THE TIMING

Workshops can take place over the course of 30 minutes, or over the course of several days. Online workshops are best when attempting to max out at around three or four hours. If you have more to cover than you can possibly get to within that time frame, consider splitting your session up over a couple of days.

THE UNIQUE AFFORDANCES OF WORKSHOPS

Workshops allow for movement, human connection, and the use of physical materials. To the best of your ability, you should attempt to address these unique aspects of an in-person experience Online. Even though you are virtual, ask people to stand up and move. Leave time for general discussion. Consider using a platform like Mural to simulate a physical wall or white board.

ETIQUETTE

Ahead of your workshop, ask that people find a designated space to join (read: QUIET). Encourage the use of headsets so that everyone can hear each other well enough. Set an expectation early on that, unless you're talking, you're on mute. By addressing all of this before the workshop, you can avoid the awkward requests. Also, if they have the technical capability, request that all participants keep their cameras on. It allows you to see and respond to interest and confusion!

KEEP EVERYTHING IN ONE PLACE

Create a shared Google Drive that houses all of the relevant materials for your workshop. This should include the workshop's agenda, and any other documents that are critical for the group as a whole to have. By putting this all in one place, you can avoid forcing the participants to scroll through their email to find something you sent days or weeks before.

AND YOU'RE OFF!

Depending on the purpose of your workshop, you can use a range of tools however you'd like. Remember that it is important, especially in a virtual environment, to have the workshops experience feel very fast-paced. Additionally, it's important to call on people since it is easier to hide behind the "virtual wall" and lose interest.

SWITCH IT UP!

Things get boring really quickly in a virtual workshop. Don't have one person speak for too long. Vary your activities. Mix in some peculiar prompts. Get people into breakout rooms. By constantly switching it up, you can increase your chances of engagement. Keep it fun and interactive!

By the way, here are some recommended tools to make your remote work life a bit more easy to manage:



For video calls, Zoom.



For group brainstorming, Mural.

Check out the next page for an example of how to convert your physical workshop to a virtual one.

■ *Bonus Material*

VIRTUAL WORKSHOP CASE STUDY

The following is series of six learnings from converting a physical workshop into a virtual one. Once COVID-19 restricted travel, we were forced to convert a full-day physical workshop to a virtual one for about 30 participants. Here's how we went about it.

FULL-DAY? NO WAY.

The workshop was originally set to take place over the course of 7 hours, in-person, including a one hour lunch break. 6 hours on screen, even with a one-hour break, is far too long. Instead, we broke the workshop into two parts. Part one was three hours long, and part two was an additional three hours long. Each part was separated by about a week. This allowed for reflection and thought prompts to take place asynchronously between sessions.

FROM MICRO TO MACRO.

Throughout the virtual workshop, we broke the experience up every 10-15 minutes to move from individual exercises to small breakout team exercises to full group discussions and lectures. In doing so, we ensure the pace feels fast enough and no one gets bored.

HIGH-TECH IS GREAT, BUT SO IS SCRATCH PAPER.

In a traditional workshop, it's common to have people fill out a worksheet or scribble some thoughts on a Post-It Note. This is especially useful in a virtual workshop as working on a tangible piece of paper will give the participants' eyes a break.

TAKE A BREAK.

After two hours of non-stop activities, it was time for a break. We had each participant turn off their video and audio for 10 minutes, and instructed everyone to take a walk around their space. The key was to encourage participants to avoid screens during this time. Almost everyone took us up on that request ;)

THE TALKING HEAD.

We worked hard to limit the amount of speaking any one person would do during the session (including us as the facilitators!). To do this, we consistently called upon different participants to encourage them to share.

FIND TIME TO PLAY!

When we were at a good stopping point, we played a game of MOOZ, a randomized scavenger hunt experience that takes just a few minutes to complete. We recommend checking it out, it was a welcome mental break: gum.co/moozgame

There are a lot of fun things you can do to make your virtual workshop as good as the "real" thing. The key is to get creative, and mix things up! No one wants to stare at a screen for too long. How can you make it worth it?

■ Bonus Material

SAMPLE REMOTE WORK TECH STACK

At verynice, we've tried out all kinds of tools to facilitate our remote work in a better way. Here is our current remote work tech stack of choice.

